



image

253

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN





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EDITOR & ADDITIONAL DIALOGUE

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Publisher For Image Comics
ERIC STEPHENSON

SPAWN CREATED BY
TODD McFARLANE

PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

Al Simmons is haunted by the past. He learns that his Costume has a secret. Someone who thought Al was dead, comes to realize he isn't.





'Our dead are never dead to us,
until we have forgotten them.'
- George Eliot



...I UNDERSTAND THE
PATIENT HAD A ROUGH NIGHT.
LET'S INCREASE HIS DOSAGE OF
MIDAZOLAM BY FIVE MILLIGRAMS,
AND WATCH HIS INTRAVENOUS
FLUIDS.

YES,
DOCTOR.

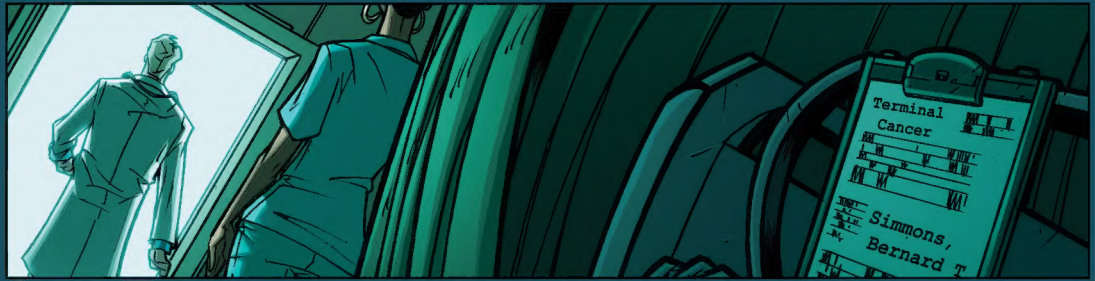


MONITOR
HIS RESPIRATORY
SECRETIONS AND LET ME
KNOW IF HE EXPERIENCES
ANY ADDITIONAL
DISCOMFORT. WHAT
ABOUT HIS FAMILY? HAVE
WE HEARD ANY WORD
FROM THEM?

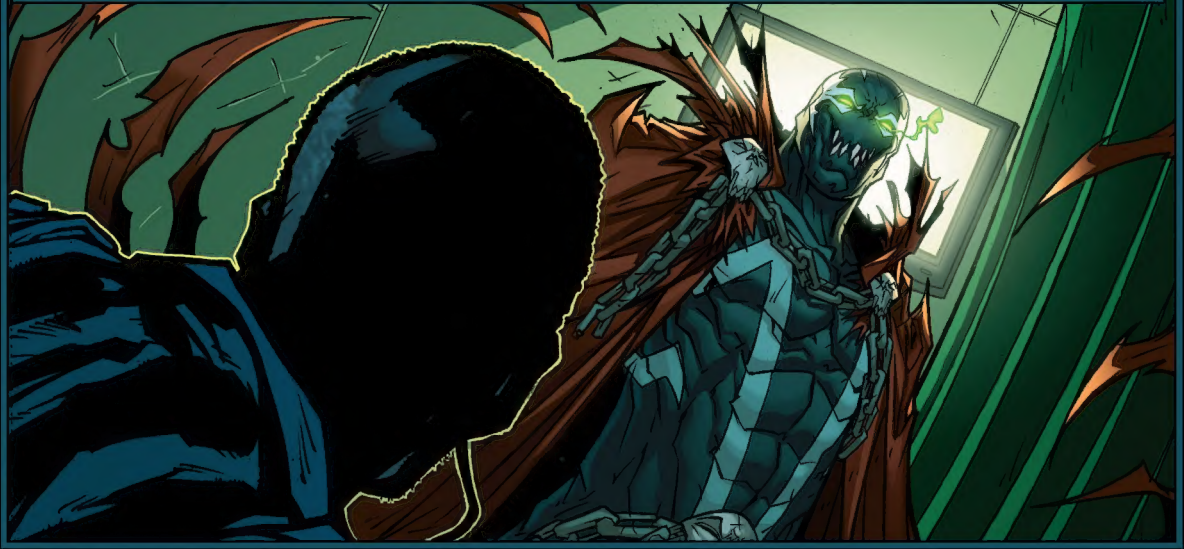
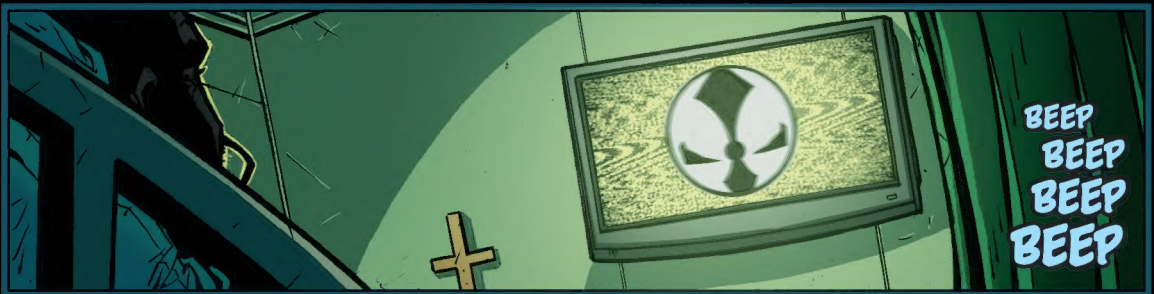
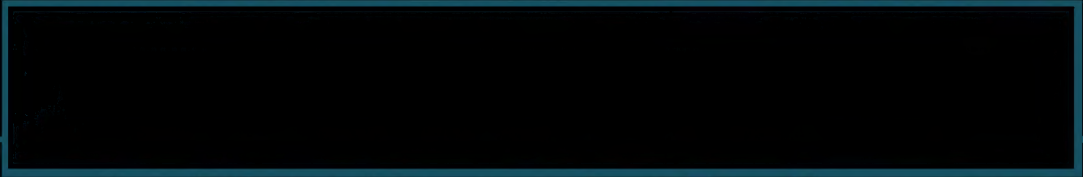
NOT
YET.

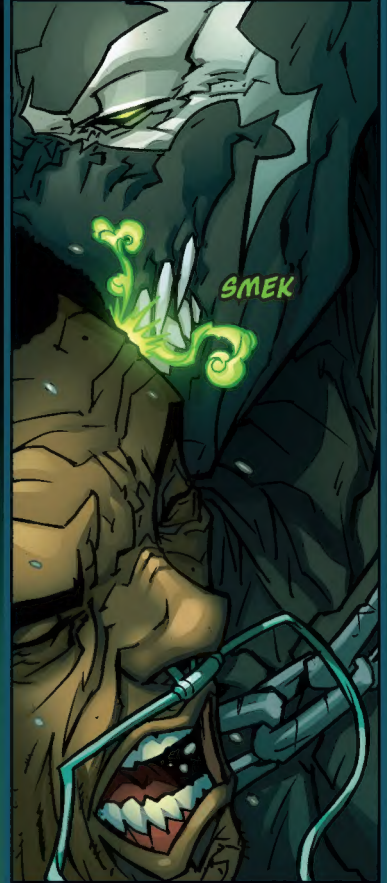


LET'S GET
CONTACT INFORMATION
FROM THE PATIENT'S WIFE.
I THINK HIS CHILDREN
DESERVE TO KNOW THEIR
FATHER DOESN'T HAVE
LONG...



Terminal
Cancer
DATE: 10/10/10
TIME: 10:00 AM
BY: J. SIMMONS
PATIENT: Simmons,
Bernard T.

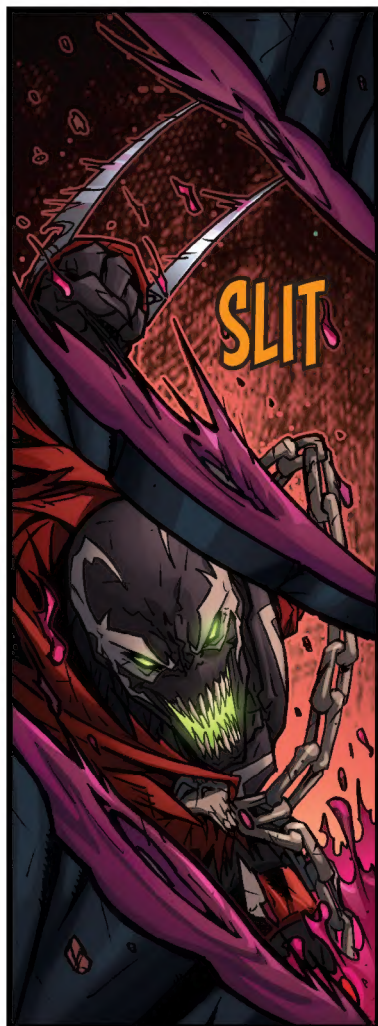

















I WENT
TO SLEEP. SHE
TOLD ME SHE
WAS GOING TO
FETCH GINGER
ALE---

IMAGINE THE
IRONY. SHE WENT
TO A BAR INSTEAD,
TRYING TO WASH AWAY
HER FEELINGS. AND WHEN
SHE FINDS OUT YOU'RE
DEAD, SHE'LL FEEL SORRY
FOR HERSELF AND
THAT'LL BE HER NEXT
EXCUSE.



AL, YOUR
MOTHER LOVED
US IN HER OWN WAY.
SHE JUST... SHE WAS
ALWAYS SCARED TO
SHOW IT TO ANYONE.
ESPECIALLY YOU AND
MARC, IN CASE
YOU'D HATE HER
ANYWAY.

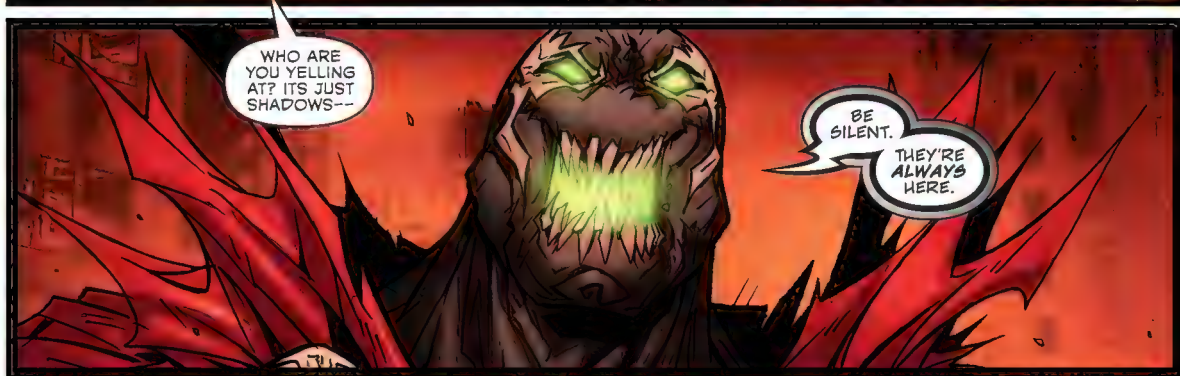
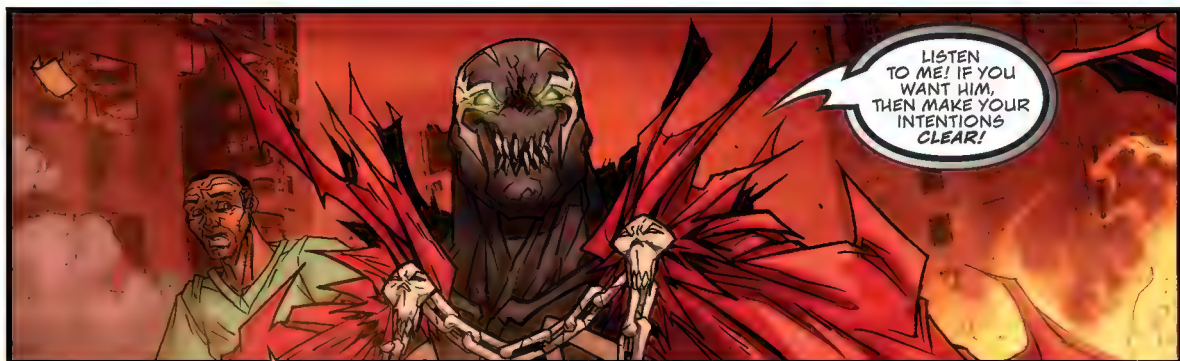
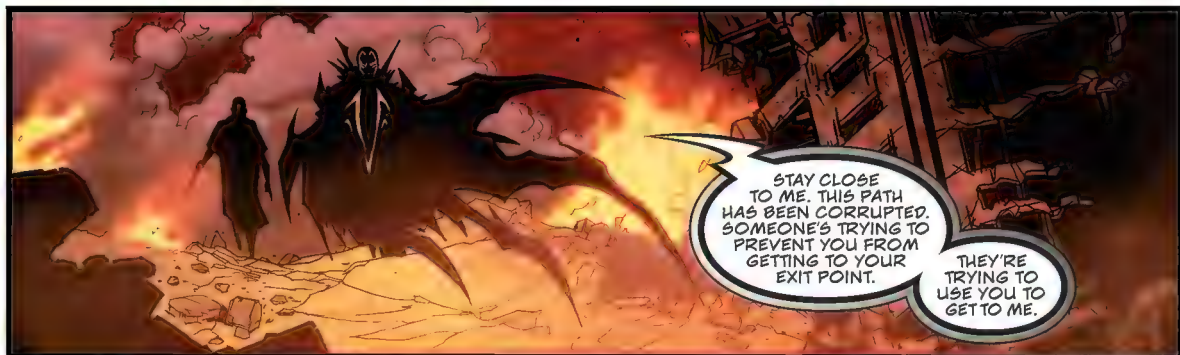
THE
CONCEPT OF
LOVE IS JUST AN
APPROXIMATION.
PEOPLE DON'T
WANT TO BE LOVED.
THEY WANT TO
BE SAFE.

THEN
WHY ARE
YOU
HERE?



TO
MAKE
THINGS
RIGHT.

BUT
NOT WITH
YOU.





THESE
CREATURES
HAVE NEVER LIVED.
THEY'RE ASPECTS--
LESSER COPIES OF
AN ORIGINAL, SENT
TO DO HIS DIRTY
WORK.

DON'T
ADDRESS
THEM DIRECTLY.
DON'T REFER TO
THEM WITH YOUR
THOUGHTS. THEY'LL
FIND ALL THE
CRACKS.



HOW?
HOW CAN I
NOT THINK
OF SOME-
THING?

THAT
SHOULD BE
EASY.

THE SAME
WAY YOU NEVER
THOUGHT OF
ME.





YOUR ASPECTS
HAVE NO POWER
AGAINST ME!
STILL, YOU INSIST
ON TESTING MY
RESOLVE!



YOU
THINK
I'M STILL
CONNECTED
TO THIS ONE
BECAUSE HE
Sired MY
HUMAN
FORM?

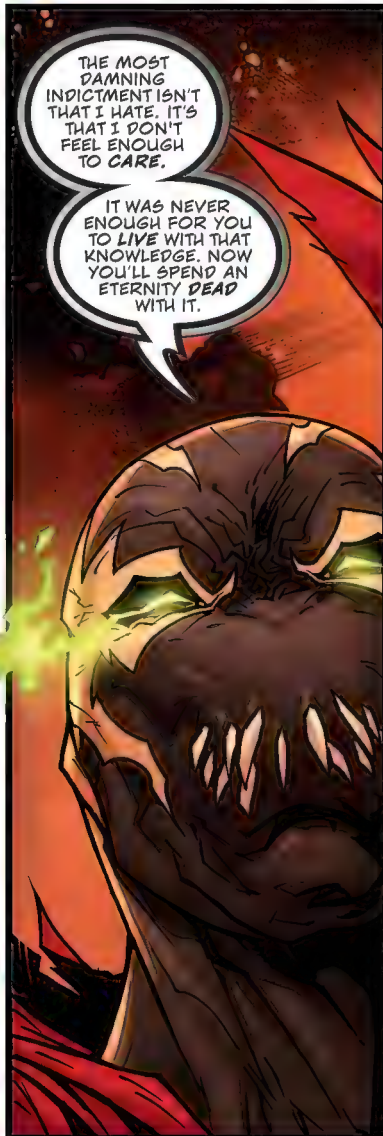


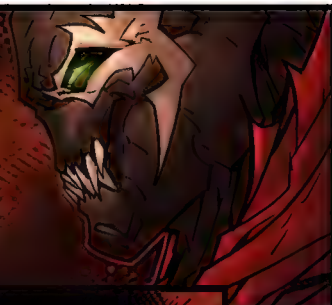
YOU
CAN'T CARE
FOR SOME-
ONE YOU
DON'T KNOW.
YOU CAN'T BE
TIED JUST BY
BLOOD.

STILL,
YOU TRY.
BECAUSE
YOU CAN'T
ACCEPT
THAT ALL I
FEEL...



...IS
NOTHING!





I'M THE
PRODUCT OF A
LOVELESS MARRIAGE
BETWEEN A DRUNKEN BITCH
AND A MARTYR WHO
LIVED FOR HIS OWN
INTERESTS.


SO, I'M
NOTHING OF
CONSEQUENCE. JUST
THE END RESULT OF A
FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT
FOR A TAX DEDUCTION.
NOTHING MORE,
NOTHING LESS.



WE
COULD
MAKE THIS
RIGHT.

YOU SAID IT
YOURSELF: THERE'S
ETERNITY--


THERE'S A
LENS THROUGH
WHICH WE ARE ALL
VIEWED--YOURS IS
TOO DISTORTED TO
RESHAPE. YOU CREATED
THIS CORRUPTION--
OTHERS ARE SIMPLY
SHAPING IT
FOR THEIR OWN
ENDS.



MARC STAYED
WITH US! HE STUCK
IT OUT... AS CRAPPY AS
LIFE WAS! BUT YOU-- YOU
LEFT! IF YOU WON'T
MAKE REPARATIONS FOR
YOUR MOTHER AND I,
THEN DO IT FOR HIS
SAKE!



MY BROTHER
IS A SACK OF
BLOOD, WRAPPED
AROUND A HEART.
HE DOESN'T
MATTER ANY
MORE.



NOW
COME WITH
ME, UNLESS YOU
WANT TO SPEND
THAT ETERNITY
OF YOURS IN
HELL.



WAIT...
IF WE'RE
NOT GOING
TO HELL, THEN
WHAT? YOU'RE
GOING TO
TAKE ME TO
HEAVEN?

TO YOUR
JUDGMENT
POINT.
NOTHING
MORE.

WHERE
YOU'RE SENT
AFTER THAT
ISN'T UP TO ME...
AND NO LONGER
UP TO YOU. HOW
AND WHY YOU
ARE JUDGED IS
A MATTER OF
RANDOM
CHANCE.



THEN
LET'S
GET THIS
OVER...

--QUIET!
MY SKIN...
IT JUST GOT
COLD.

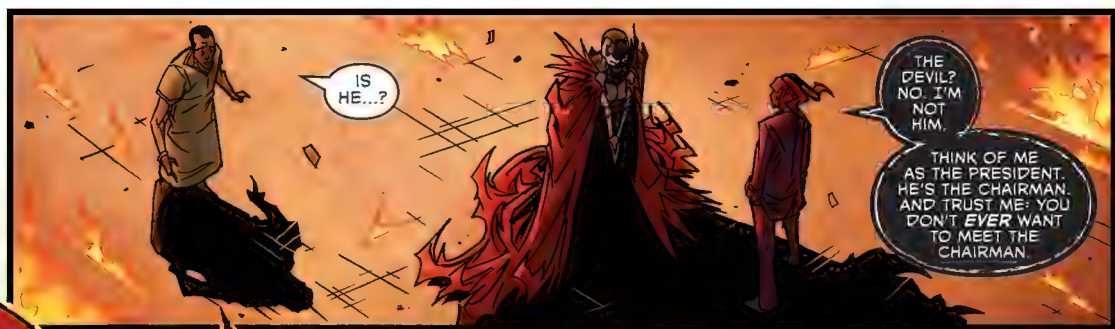
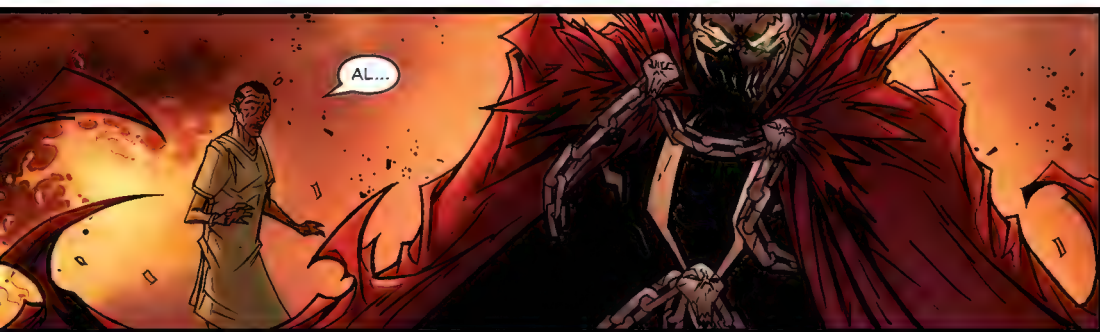


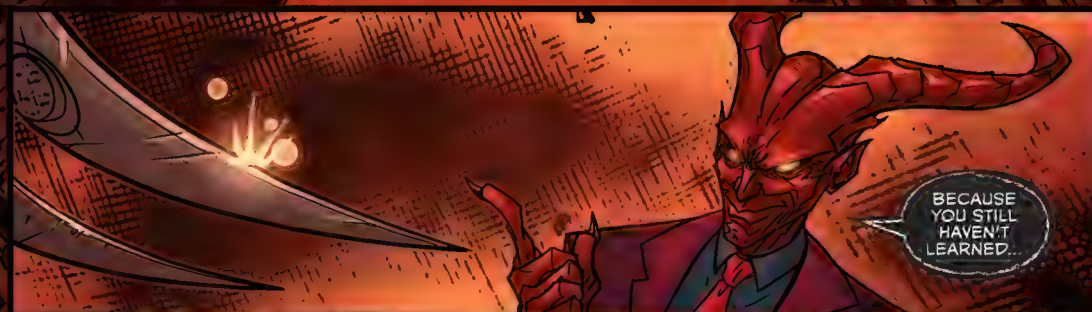
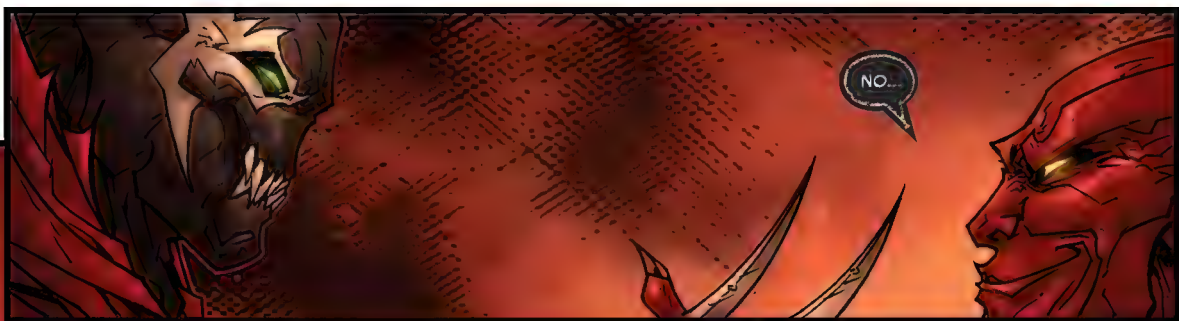
SHOW
YOURSELF,
BELIAL.

I KNOW
YOU'RE
THERE.



HELLO,
AL...











AL...?
HOW DID
YOU...

SURVIVE?

YES.

BECAUSE
IT'S WHAT I DO.
IT'S THE ONE THING
YOU INSTILLED IN ME...
THAT NO MATTER WHAT
HAPPENS... I NEEDED TO
SURVIVE. YOUR ABUSE
AND NEGLECT TAUGHT
ME THAT SKILL VERY
QUICKLY.

SURVIVING
IS WHAT I'VE
BEEN DOING
SINCE I WAS
FIVE.

AL, I DON'T
KNOW WHY YOU'VE
DONE THIS FOR ME.
BUT I WANT YOU TO
UNDERSTAND...

I LOVED
YOU. I'VE
ALWAYS LOVED
YOU.

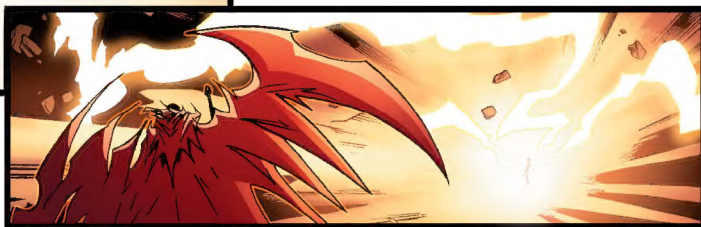
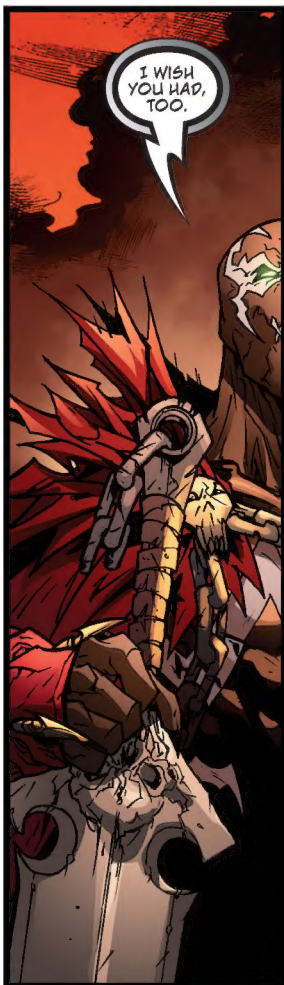
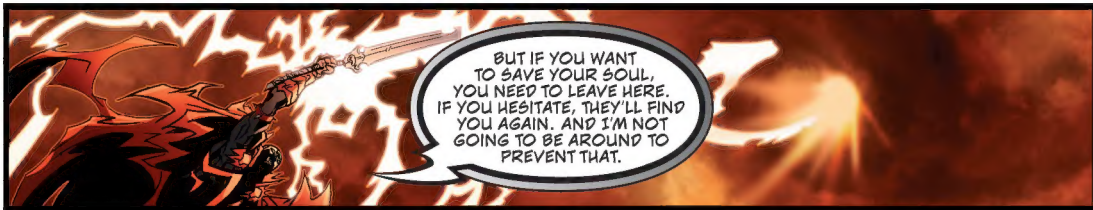
YOU'RE
MY SON. AND
THOUGH I WAS A
BAD FATHER, AND
DIDN'T KNOW HOW
TO ACT, IT DIDN'T
MEAN I DIDN'T
LOVE YOU OR
CARE ABOUT
YOU.

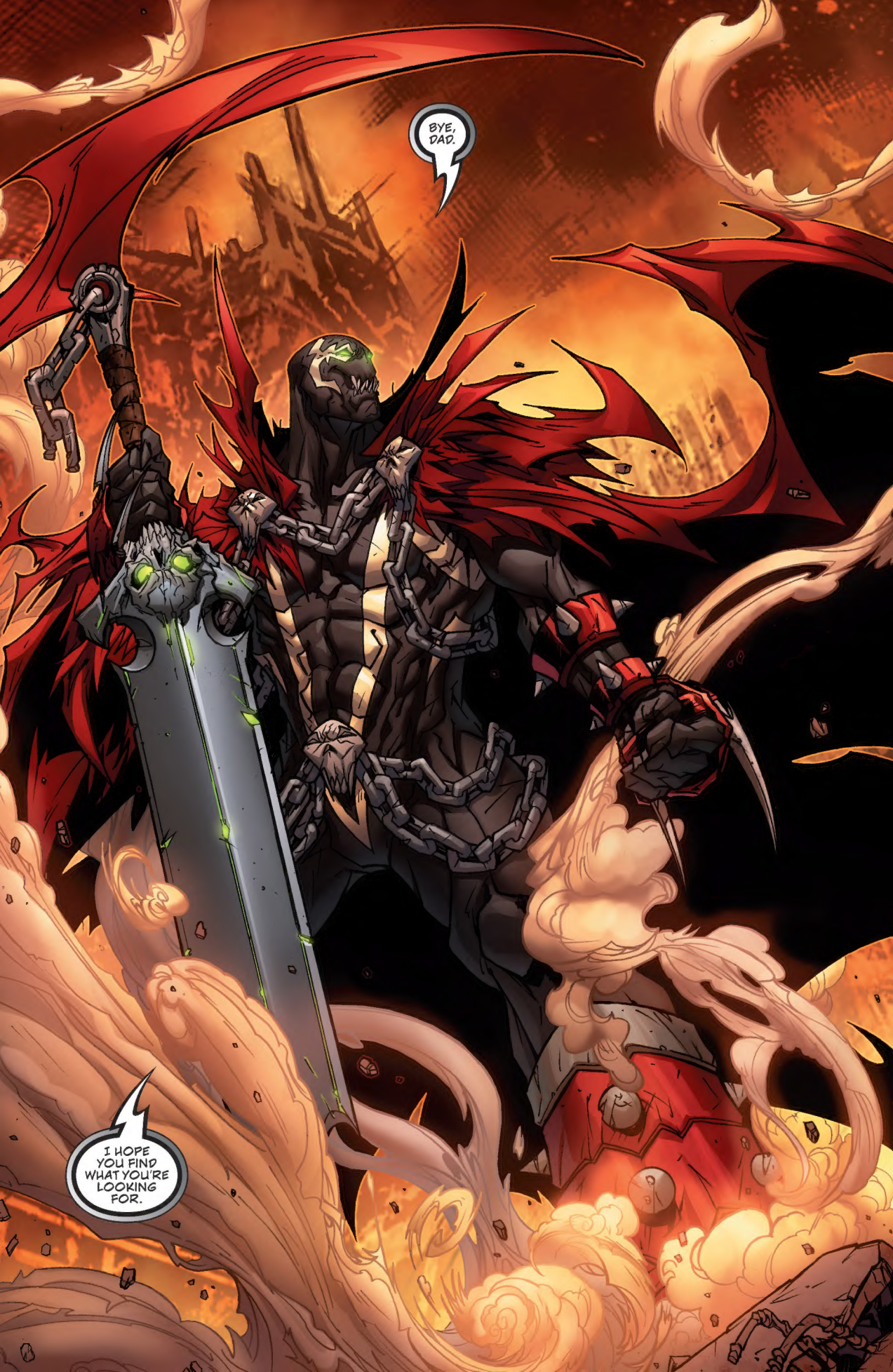
SO,
MAYBE IT'S
TOO LATE FOR
ME TO ASK,
BUT...

FORGIVE
ME. FOR
EVERYTHING I
DID TO YOU,
PLEASE, PLEASE
FORGIVE
ME.

YOU'RE
RIGHT.

IT'S
TOO LATE.





BYE,
DAD.

I HOPE
YOU FIND
WHAT YOU'RE
LOOKING
FOR.



SPAWNING GROUND

Hello all,

I can't believe we are already **THREE** issues into the new direction of *Spawn*. In this edition of *Spawning Ground*, we invited the new artist on *Spawn*, Jonboy to answer a few questions about how he came up with the new artistic style for *Spawn*.

Enjoy!

Shannon Bailey
Publishing Coordinator

Q: What was your inspiration for the new look of *Spawn*?

I wanted to stay true to the core elements that make *Spawn*, well.... *Spawn*. I stuck with Todd's primary design and worked in some tweaks here and there. Especially since THIS version of Al Simmons/*Spawn* was going to be more proactive and not really sulking in the alleys. His design needed to be more aggressive. With the cape being the main focus, I made less of a cape that moves and made it react more like bat wings than folded drapery—lots of aggressive shapes and sharp points. I changed up his hand gauntlets a bit to add some claws so *Spawn* can do some real damage when fighting up close and personal. I also added more chains (since I like chains and chains are, well, cool). I've gotten a lot of flak for this, but I added in the teeth. I know people think it's *Venom* and I can see why they feel that way, but it's more of a nod and a wink to Greg Capullo's amazing run on *Spawn*. Towards the end of his run, Greg gave *Spawn* these really intimidating razor teeth like *Spawn* was a grinning skull, which I thought worked perfectly with Al/*Spawn*'s new aggressive proactive demeanor for the book.

Q: What did you want to bring to *Spawn* to make it your own?

Both Paul and I wanted to focus more on Al Simmons. He's *Spawn* without the costume. We want to focus on the MAN. It's hard to relate to guy in a costume but as a man, I think we can make people identify with the character and what makes him tick. That's why we want to make *Spawn* our own. Our goal is to make Al interesting both in and out of the costume. Al is no longer burnt up like a hot dog and he's rocking a cool leather jacket and hoodie, walking in public for all to see. He's not running from anyone. And in this age of diversity in comics, we want to remind folks that Al Simmons is African American. A black superhero who has been around for over 20 years. It's a big deal and he doesn't need to be shielded by a mask to be awesome.

Q: How did you prepare for this job? Did you do research or go back and look at old *Spawn* comics?

I talked to Todd...a lot! He's knows the character inside and out and I wanted to be very respectful with the character. I reread the first 12 issues of *Spawn* and kept thinking that this is the core of the character people remember the most, so this is how we need to handle the character coming back. Al needs to feel familiar to how people remember him in those first 12 issues. Then we can have him change over the course of our run. It's very exciting to be reintroducing him to fans. The key is recapturing how fans felt about the character then and make it applicable to what Paul, Todd, Laura and myself are doing with him now.

Q: What made you want to take on *Spawn*?

I had just left Riot Games and wanted to get back into doing art for myself, so to speak. I was in doing stuff for DC when I met Todd at SDCC and well, the rest is history. Getting the chance to work on the biggest independent superhero in comics and reboot *Spawn* is an once-in-a-lifetime offer. I really like the challenge of doing a monthly comic.

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Q: What about old characters? How did you give them an updated look?

I'm a HUGE fan of Spawn's Rogue Gallery and both Paul and myself have been talking about bringing a lot of the cast back. Which we have so far—like Wanda—but you'll start to see those characters get their final arcs and new characters coming into the fold. Soon, we'll see the Violator (or have we seen him already? HmMMM). Hopefully Jim Downing and other lost characters will show up.

Q: What about the story of Spawn draws you in?

Well it's really a morality tale we are telling. The book heavily centers on free will and the right to choose what is best for one's self or to put that choice aside and think of others. I do like books that try to say something—anything! It's a lot better than a pointless crossover or two characters just slugging it out. Those are fun, but to me, it's the equivalent to two kids playing with action figures. At this point in my career, it's nice to be doing something where we can have the action, but also say something. Art and stories are a reflection of ourselves or what we want to say about society at large. These stories can and should be entertaining, but they should also engage you and make you think. We have Al Simmons fighting a very human struggle over good and evil. He's fighting to protect those he cares about, but he also want to make sure

no one ever goes through what HE had to endure. Each issue is self-contained, but lends itself to a much bigger story and I don't want to spoil anything, but I hope fans will stick with us and enjoy the story we are telling as it unfolds.

Q: What is your process for drawing a monthly comic?

It's a lot, but definitely, a labor of love. Todd, Paul and myself usually have a group call and talk about what we want to do. Paul works up the story with Todd and both he and Todd work out all the nuances. Then they send me a script, which I read through about 2-3 times and make notes. Then I call Paul or Todd if I have questions or ideas. After that, I get to work roughing it out. About 70% of my work is in the rough/layout, which I try to keep pretty tight and if time permits, I send it to the team to make sure the story tracks and I'll make notes or corrections. Once I get the green light, I'll pencil them old school (pencil and paper), scan and finally, do digital ink and clean up. The final artwork is sent to the team and I'll have Todd go over them and he usually fixes my mistakes (thank God). I usually do about 5-7 pages of roughs a week and also complete 5-7 pages in that same week to stay on schedule. It can be grueling, but it's definitely a labor of love and it's hard to let go of pages I'm not quite happy with. But it's production and you have to let it go and move on to the next or else I'll be late and my Editor will kill me. Seriously. She means business when she says pages need to be done.



NEXT ISSUE

Spawn has to bend time and space to make sure an event in history goes as planned.